In Press with J Health Psych Vol 1, 2006

Media, Racism and Public Health Psychology

Raymond Nairn,
ADDRESS: Social & Community Health,
School of Population Health,
The University of Auckland,
Private Bag 92019,
Auckland,
NEW ZEALAND
Ph 64 9 3737-599 ex 86553
Fax 64 9 303-5932
r.nairn@auckland.ac.nz

Frank Pega
AFFILIATION: Whariki Research Group
Massey University
Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

TimMcCreanor
AFFILIATION: Whariki Research Group
Massey University
Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

Jenny Rankine
AFFILIATION: Words & Pictures Media Consultancy
Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

Angela Barnes
AFFILIATION: Whariki Research Group
Massey University
Auckland, NEW ZEALAND

.

Please address all correspondence or inquiries about this article to the first author.

Word count 6448

Media, Racism and Public Health Psychology

Abstract

A growing literature has established that racism contributes to ill-health of migrants, minority group members and indigenous peoples. Racial discrimination has been shown to act at personal, institutional and societal levels, negatively affecting physical health as evidenced by heart disease and other stress related conditions and generally negating wellbeing, signalled by psychological and psychiatric disorders including depression.

In our highly mediatized world, mass communications in diverse forms are decisive for people's knowledge and understandings of the world and their place in it. From critical studies we know that the media consistently marginalize, denigrate and neglect particular ethnic and cultural groups. Where media do focus on such groups much of the reporting is negative and stereotyping. Achievements are ignored or minimized while representations of those groups as problems for and threats to the dominant are highlighted.

In this paper we consider the particular case of media representations of the indigenous Maori of Aotearoa New Zealand. We review extant studies to argue that detailed and systematic study is necessary for the development of critical, local media scholarship. Such scholarship is necessary if the current media impact on Maori health and wellbeing is to be mitigated. While such considerations may not have been traditional concerns of health psychology we, following George Albee (2003), argue for them as affirming the need for critical public health psychology.

226 words

Keywords: racism, media, indigenous people, public health, colonisation

Introduction

> "…[will] the Maoris … prove an exception to the rule which seems universal, viz, that the aboriginal savages must fade away before their civilized brethren."
>
> (Gore Browne, 1859, cited in Sinclair, 1957, p. 147)

The inspirational call by community psychologists Albee and Fryer (2003) for a public health psychology and the generation of conceptual and practical frameworks of this discipline (Hepworth, 2004) marks a watershed in attempting to shift the discipline from its individualist, pathologising roots (Antonovsky, 1996) to a more functional focus on the roles that physical and social environments play in producing and maintaining the wellbeing of populations. Similarly Murray and Cambell (2003, p 233) called for a re-orientation of health psychology towards "a discipline that sides clearly with the interests of the oppressed and disenfranchised masses", articulating the need for a conscious politicizing of health psychologists and their alignment with broader social justice movements. That challenge paralleled an earlier call for more effective engagement with "race-associated differences in health" that acknowledged the impacts of racism and the effects of social classification "in a race-conscious society" (Jones, 2000, p. 1212). Such politicising cannot be achieved using universal (Western) concepts that have not been adequately localised (Corin, 1994).

In responding to those challenges from within a colonial setting we situate the universals; 'colonisation', 'racism', and 'media' in our local situation. That enables us to display effective linkages between the concepts as they were and continue to be instantiated in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the consequent effects on the indigenous Maori. The foundations of our critical health psychology project incorporate four

distinguishable areas of scholarship; colonisation - viewed as the creation of a racist society, impacts of racism on health and wellbeing, discourses of race in Aotearoa, and the place of race in media practices and products. Each of those areas is reviewed before we present a broad theoretical approach to our situated study of media racism.

Institutional Racism

Racism, the right to dominate racialized others has been widely discussed and theorised (Essed, 1991; Jones, 2000; Reeves 1983; van Dijk, 1991,1993). While acknowledging personal and internalised forms of racism (Jones, 2000) we focus on institutional racism and the means by which it is naturalized (Billig, 2001).

> Institutional racism refers to the way in which groups are differentially treated by institutions as a result of a set of organisational policies and procedures. (Spoonley, 1993: 21)

We regard institutional racism as both driving the processes of colonisation and as a continuing consequence of those processes.

Historically psychology has focused primarily on personal racism locating its origins in, personal characteristics of 'the racist' (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson & Sanford, 1950; Allport, 1954), everyday cognitive processes – categorisation and generalisation – (Hamilton, 1981), or in use of social categories in (personal) social identity theory (Turner, 1987). Those conceptualisations effectively excluded the structural, systemic and discursive contexts within which discrimination and oppression occurred (Jones, 2000; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Psychologists who have sought to engage the discipline in producing real change in racist and other unjust social orders and institutions have attended to the discursive and social foundations of the social order (McCreanor, 1997; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). Like

other authors (Murray, 2004) they have emphasised the critical importance of studying the interplay between context, discourse, and ideology.

Examining the ways in which Pakeha New Zealanders responded to 'race issues', Wetherell & Potter showed 'traditional' psychological approaches to racism were inadequate. They noted that, while some parts of a speakers' self-presentation and (discursive) treatment of Maori and Pacific peoples might seem to reveal racist attitudes, social identity, or personality, other parts of the same person's talk contradicted that view. Describing racism in dominant institutions Spoonley (1993) emphasised the role of ideologies that served the dominant group and legitimated gate-keeping mechanisms. Examining institutions, such as health and education that are responsible for social and economic resources he identified racism where members of an ethnic group were denied equality of access to those resources and services by organisational practices that required conformity to specific cultural expectations. Members of an (institutionally) racist organization may not be racist in intent, and those who represent the organization may deny that the outcomes were intended, but, if a particular ethnic group is disadvantaged, that is institutional racism. Walker (1986) described this as complex because members of the dominant group who benefit "are often unaware of its [racism] origins or its functions in maintaining a structure of Pakeha domination and Maori subordination."

Colonisation – creation of a racist society

Colonisation and its sibling imperialism have been subjects of intense, informed debate (Miles, 1994; Rattansi, 1994, Slater, 1994) that increasingly acknowledges that colonisers intended to establish and maintain the means to profit from the resources of the 'new' land. Numerous authors have identified patterns of trade, missions,

settlement, war, and legislative control in which indigenous law, education, political practices and language were supplanted by those of the coloniser (Ballara, 1975; Belich, 1985, 1993; Walker, 1990). One effect of those changes was that the foreign became the natural or normal and the indigenous, at particularly those who did or do not assimilate, became alien. Described that baldly the injustice of colonisation is intolerable yet such portrayals are rare because discursive and social practices in colonial countries normalise and justify the situation (McCreanor, 1993a; Nairn & McCreanor, 1991; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The following brief sketch of the establishment of New Zealand, as an England in the South Pacific (Bellich, 1996), is intended to show how English norms, practices and institutions were established and naturalised in Aotearoa.

In 1840 Maori representatives signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi; hereafter Te Tiriti) with the British Crown. Maori had already been guaranteed "te tino rangatiranga" (independence) and "mana" (sovereignty) in the Declaration of Independence of 1835 (Orange, 1987). Te Tiriti confirmed Maori sovereignty but ceded "kawanatanga" (governance) to the British Crown (Yensen, Hague & McCreanor, 1989, p.33). There is much debate about the meaning and significance of Te Tiriti (Barrett & Connolly-Stone, 1998; Joseph, 2000; Kawharu, 1991; Sharpe, 1995) but despite contested aspects it is clear that Queen Victoria guaranteed the chiefs of all Maori tribes inhabiting Aotearoa /New Zealand her royal protection, including all the rights and privileges of British subjects. Although the Queen's representative presented, and those attending debated, Te Tiriti (the Maori language text), subsequent settler governments, relying on the English language draft, ignored Te Tiriti and acted as if Maori had seceded sovereignty. On such dubious claims of

sovereignty the colonists established their own state modelled on the British economic, class, and parliamentary systems.

From that point colonisation of Aotearoa proceeded on the presumption that Maori would be assimilated into the dominant (Pakeha) society. That policy reflected the commonplaces of European imperialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. British colonisation in Aotearoa was a form of "official nationalism" (Anderson 1991, p. 150) as exemplified by Macaulay's *Minute on Education* (1835) that was intended to:

> create a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect (as cited in Anderson, 1991, p. 91).

There were similar efforts to create a 'civilized' cadre of indigenes in Aotearoa through education (see below) and land legislation. Those efforts were routinely motivated by settler concerns to free Maori (individuals), particularly the young, from "the beastly communism of the pa[1]" (Stafford, 1864).

The Anglocentrism of the settlers' systems and institutions; finance, legislation, education, religion, and their domination of public life, made Maori the savage "other" in their own country (Belich, 1986). Settler domination was driven and underpinned by their perceived superiority as advanced, civilised, Christian people. Two applications of that presumed superiority will suffice to demonstrate how racist institutions were established at the whim and to the benefit of the settlers. Looking first at education, Maori had shown a keenness to learn to read and write Te Reo[2] from their first contact with missionary teachers who had transcribed the language. Few leading settlers showed any inclination to learn the indigenous

[1] The 'pa', often 'pah' was the most common term for Maori village or township.
[2] Te Reo Rangatira, the language of chiefs is how Maori identify their language.

language as they regarded fluency in English a sign of their civilization. Consequently schools (for Maori) were supported financially, only if provided they "provided instruction in the English language" (Biggs, 1968, p. 74). Increasingly, because school inspectors argued that the Maori language was an obstacle to civilising Maori and consequently the settler-dominated parliament passed The Native Education Act (1867), which specified that English was to be the medium of instruction. Moving the second reading of that bill Mr J.C. Richmond said:

> …for a people in the position of the Maori race it was a first condition of their progress to put them in the way of learning the language of the inhabitants and government of the Colony"

The transformation of Maori from tangata whenua (people who are the land) to a race who were to be assimilated to majority (English) practices that underpinned education in New Zealand was explicit in Richmond's statement.

Assimilation took a different form in relation to constitutional practices, especially those relating to 'ownership' of land. Among the constitutional preconceptions that colonists brought to Aotearoa was the belief that an individual's entitlement to 'own' land derived from the sovereign who retained rights to any mineral or other wealth beneath the soil. Further, European political philosophers had concluded that only people who improved land could have title to it, so both the colonial administration and the settlers, presumed that the Crown 'owned' the beds of rivers, lakes and the sea. Consistent with Maori conceptions of ownership (Jackson, 2004), Maori sought to assert sovereignty over such areas and resources on the basis of their uninterrupted possession and usage. When Maori accustomed to gather fish and shellfish from the seabed near Thames sought a ruling on their title from the Maori Land Court that

court was barred from issuing a ruling, and the bar remained in force until 1993. Since the establishment of "responsible settler government" in 1852 the Crown has consistently set settler interests before Maori as in that Thames example. In 2003 the Court of Appeal determined that the Maori Land Court could hear and rule on Maori entitlements for use of the seabed and foreshore. The response of the Labour led government was entirely consistent with those of their predecessors; they promised to assert public, i.e. non-Maori, ownership over New Zealand seabed and foreshore not currently covered by private title. Amid the ensuing debates it became clear that the foreshore and seabed were not covered by existing legal definitions and could indeed be regarded as remnant sovereign possessions of Maori.

Despite strenuous opposition that legislation passed into law in November 2004. It vested the seabed and foreshore in "the people of New Zealand" without compensation, concession, or acknowledgement that Maori had not extinguished or surrendered their title. Opponents of the legislation argued that it continued the government tradition of breaching Te Tiriti by abrogating Maori rights comparing the Act to earlier illegal confiscations of Maori land by the British Crown (Jackson,.2004; Sykes, 2004). It should be clear that we agree with Jackson, Sykes, and others who argued that the Foreshore and Seabed Bill was today's instance of the settler government illicitly asserting sovereignty over (Maori) resources on behalf of the Pakeha majority.

In these and numerous other ways the colonisers created a society that where Maori are regarded with suspicion and are expected to succeed in institutions grounded in overt hostility to the people, their language and their culture. Like other indigenous

peoples in colonial societies, Maori are expected to be responsible for their health and wellbeing while coping with pervasive but largely unacknowledged racism.

Racism affects health and well-being

There is a large and growing body of evidence that racism and racial discrimination impact negatively on people's health (Gee, 2002; Krieger & Sidney, 1996; LaViest, 2003; Williams, 1999). Experience of racial discrimination has been shown to be associated with higher rates of mental ill-health (Williams et al, 2003). Harrell, Hall, & Taliaferro (2003) reviewed findings of negative physiological impacts created by incidents of racial discrimination and concluded that racial discrimination undermined people's health. Karlson and Nazroo (2003) demonstrated that different forms of racism; personal, institutional and societal, operated independently and additively to effect negative outcomes on a range of health indicators.

On the basis of such findings, researchers have advocated investing in anti-racism as a public health measure (Kreiger, 2003; McKenzie, 2003) and concluded that progress in meeting public health goals requires the elimination of racism (James, 2003). Kreiger (2003) identified the complex of epistemological, methodological and political issues to be addressed in treating racism as a threat to public health and concluded that it is a key field for investment for the public good. Although the reviewed research indites racism as a significant cause of the poorer health experienced by minority ethnic and indigenous groups, Nazroo (2003) argued that that the interpretation was clouded by inadequate specification and measurement of ethnicity, socio-economic status (SES), social disadvantage, and racism. Further, he concluded that many researchers and commentators exploited that masking by continuing to use of victim-blaming interpretations (see also Lukes, Banuazizi, Liem,

et al., 1996; Ryan, 1971). Assessing how the crucial variables were acknowledged and integrated into mainstream research; design, execution, and interpretation, Valencia (1997) argued they gave priority to 'deficit thinking'. Such interpretations declare those subject to discrimination to be responsible for their own fate while deflecting attention from the social structures, procedures, and ideologies that encourage or enact the discrimination.

Research findings in Aotearoa/New Zealand are consistent with the international research. A recent Ministry of Health report *Decades of Disparities* (Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, et al., 2003) summarised local studies that examined the role of interpersonal and institutional discrimination. Age standardised rates of mortality for Maori were significantly worse than non-Maori, often by margins in greater than 100% over a wide range of fatal conditions such as cardiovascular disease, cancers, diabetes, accidents and suicides. Of particular note was the observation that life-expectancy for Maori and Pakeha have increasingly diverged since the mid-1980s. From that point Maori (male and female) life expectancy was steady or declined while non-Maori life expectancy had risen. The authors of the reported noted that the divergence coincided with the introduction of policies enacting a radical neo-liberal agenda in Aotearoa New Zealand (Easton, 1997; Kelsey, 1995).

Health services research (Westbrooke, Baxter, Hogan J, 2001; Scott, Marwick, & Crampton, 2003) showed how racism might affect the health of individual Maori. Westbrooke et al analysed disparities in treatment rates and concluded that Maori were denied equal access to cardiac interventions. Scott et al (2003) showed that Maori and low-income groups were significantly less likely to visit a GP than any

other groups because visits incurred significant costs not mitigated by subsidies that were intended to raise Maori rates of engagement with health care. Local research also includes micro-level studies such as an analysis of the ways in which doctors talk about Maori health. When talking about Maori health, non-Maori general practitioners employ many of the discourses identified in studies of Pakeha talk (McCreanor, 1993a, b; Nairn & McCreanor, 1990, 1991) that supported a 'standard story' (Fish, 1980) of Maori assimilation into the Pakeha dominated society (McCreanor and Nairn, 2002). Examinations of how Maori health stories were reported in the mainstream media have shown that journalists used similar discursive resources in depicting Maori as needy, passive, objects of Pakeha help (Hodgetts, Masters, & Robertson, 2004; Rankine & McCreanor, 2004).

Those demonstrated links between racism and health at the population level lead to two conclusions. First, all social institutions implicated in the reproduction of racism contribute to damaging the health and wellbeing of Maori. Second, as racism 'came ashore' with the settlers it is necessary to locate those social institutions in their colonial context. We have argued that the processes of colonisation created discriminatory institutions and the ideological commonsense that naturalises their everyday practices. Unacceptable levels of personal racism among settlers fit comfortably within that social and cultural matrix that ensures that many indigenous people are damaged by internalised racism.

Discourses of race in Aotearoa

There is now a large body of research examining how social categories and social relations are constructed and modified in discourse (Billig, 2001; Fairclough, 1995; Hall, 2001; Radley, 2004; Smith, 1999; Wilkinson, 2004). Some of this work has

explored how social groups are racialized or ‘Othered’ within the dominant discourse practices (Fairclough, 1993; Reeves, 1983, Sampson, 1993).

Given the critical interest in the colonial origins of modern New Zealand it is unsurprising that debates about relationships between Maori and settler peoples in this country should have occasioned significant scholarship. Salmond (1991) charted development of these ‘race’ discourses from “first contact” (Abel Tasman’s voyage of 1641-2) until 1793. She contrasted European and Maori constructions of each other noting that, although two distinctive cultures were viewing each other for the first time, the European gaze was preset. Maori were seen through the diffracting prism of European thought as either inferior or, less consistently, as exhibiting traits that were valued or considered worthless, a precursor of “Good Maori – Bad Maori” categorisation (McCreanor, 1989, p. 91). In contrast, Salmond found that the Maori view of the newcomers was generally more positive and less ambivalent. Pakeha came with a specific view of Maori as Other (Ballara, 1986), that had been “formed in Britain or other parts of her colonial dominions" (p.l0), that natives were inferiors to whom the settlers brought the “inestimable benefits of civilization”. Colonising companies intent on luring customers promulgated similar images (McCreanor, 1997). Such portrayals of Maori might suffuse depictions of noble savages, be utilised to justify exploitation, or to account for defeats and reverses in military engagements with Maori (Belich, 1986). For example, the dominant interpretation of British (military) actions was deeply rooted in ideas of British superiority of organization, ordinance, and race, when, due to superior tactics Maori inflicted a serious defeat details of the particular engagement was tailored to contribute to a story of inevitable and unproblematic Pakeha victory.

Those views, and the discursive resources that sustained them, affected and were shaped by historical events, and have resulted in contemporary discourses on relations between Maori and settler (Fairclough, 1995). One of the earliest discursive resources, widely used by settlers to justify and rationalise their relationship with Maori, was the extinction alluded to in the epigram from Gore Browne. That notion of a 'fatal impact' was hugely popular and durable because it explained the observed decline of "Aboriginal savages" as an inexorable consequence of contact with "civilized brethren", much as the 'Law of Gravity' explained why objects fell to earth. Because the effect was understood as a 'natural law' the colonisers, apart from occasioning the decline by their arrival, were not responsible and therefore their actions did not need to be examined in detail. As with other forms of oppression the fatal impact discourse did allow speakers to assign some responsibility for the decline to the Aboriginals, as when Browne explained that their extinction was:

> …the fate [of] all who have obstructed the path of those … possessing the superiority of high civilization" (cited in Sinclair, 1957, p. 147).

Browne's implication that, had Maori been readier to accommodate the settlers by selling land, adopting the coloniser's customs, and accepting settler sovereignty, they might have averted the decline, is both contentious and an instance of 'blaming the victim' (Ryan, 1971; Jones, 2000).

Malcolm Nicholson (1987) examined material effects of late nineteenth century Pakeha representations of Maori primarily in relation to provision of healthcare and hospital services. He identified two colonial discourses that had very different consequences for provision of Maori health care and education. One discourse, that enabled Maori to be depicted as 'the noble savage', encouraged provision of

education and health care, while the other depicting them as 'ignoble savage[s]' discouraged such provision. As constructed a noble savage would benefit from health care and education because, like Macaulay's Indians (Colonisation, above), they could become civilized. Constructed as ignoble savages, Maori were considered incapable of benefiting from education and, because such savages were depicted as being of inferior or uncertain disposition, teachers and health workers were discouraged from working with them.

Unsurprisingly, Maori resisted such degrading, racialized categorisations. Sir Apirana Ngata, a prominent Maori leader through the early decades of the twentieth century, challenged historians' portrayal of Maori. He argued that Western historians consigned Maori to the past as they did not recognise it was a living culture and in doing so, rendered their recordings inaccurate. In particular their work emphasised negative images of Maori that reinforced the ideologies of the dominant group. Ngata wrote that, even when historians recorded Maori and Pakeha enjoying good working relationships, they persisted in:

> dwelling only on the romance and mystery of the past or recounting only factors of hostility, massacres, wars, riotings, and acts of degeneracy. (Ngata, n.d., p.4).

Formal studies of race discourse in Aotearoa/New Zealand have been undertaken by McCreanor (1989, 1993a, b, c, 1997), Nairn & McCreanor (1990, 1991) and Wetherell and Potter (1992). Nairn and McCreanor (1990) identified ten commonly used discursive patterns in the talk of Pakeha about Maori people and race relations, in public submissions about "Race relations in New Zealand", made to the Human Rights Commission in 1979. They argued that the patterns – interpretative repertoires (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) – sustained a durable Pakeha "commonsense" about race

relations that assumed and could 'legitimate' instances of Pakeha domination. Speakers could allude to or rely substantially upon that commonsense that constructed Maori/Pakeha relations abstracted from our colonial history, social structures and the distribution of power (Nairn and McCreanor, 1991). The descriptions of the following examples of the patterns are taken from McCreanor (1989):

> One people: We (living in New Zealand) are or should be a single united group and that is the only way in which we can avoid the dangers of divisive racial tensions.
>
> Privilege: Any institution labelled as 'Maori' e.g. "Maori Affairs Department" 'favours Maori' giving them privileges that are unfair and racist.
>
> Good Maori/Bad Maori: Enables a speaker to divide Maori into those who fit into society and those who don't, a categorisation that was deployed flexibly to attack "Stirrers" and assert national unity.
>
> Stirrers: Assumes that Maori unrest arises solely from the politically motivated actions of a minority of agitators. In the 1979 materials most identified stirrers were Pakeha. In more recent materials stirrers are typically ("Bad") Maori.

Data from the 1980s and 1990s showed that Pakeha speakers continued to rely on these and other discourses. Wetherell and Potter (1992) identified similar patterns in their interviews with (mainly) middleclass white New Zealanders although they named them differently. Maori were "fundamentally lazy" (p.15), handicapped by inefficient cultural practices, (p. 15), criminal, and still hadn't learnt the "language of the inhabitants of the colony" (p. 96). Over lengthy interviews individual speakers made selective, use of the patterns to meet specific goals. One speaker deployed a

classic exemplar of the 'Bad Maori', a 'Black Power gang member' as the helper of the stranded motorist (p. 39) to position himself as "a decent joker" (p. 53) who can see some good in everyone. Such decency, or fairness, underwrote support for special provision for Maori groups that was grounded in perceived inferiority or weaknesses of Maori (p. 54). That perception, that Maori are a people who need the advantages of "Western civilization" (p. 54), does not extend to situations where special provisions are represented as discriminating against "the Europeans". At such times speakers, relying on notions of national unity, reject such privileges arguing that the practice could destroy social relations (pp.76-7). Throughout their data Pakeha values, practices, and dominance provide the unmarked norms against which Maori are assessed.

Although New Zealand's 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) presumed Maori assimilation they have resisted, militarily, politically, and through diverse protest actions. As a people they have accomplished a stunning renaissance over the later half of the twentieth century. However, that renaissance co-exists with material and spiritual dispossession, of which the foreshore and seabed legislation described above is merely the most recent instance, ongoing selective (usually negative) discursive depictions, and opposition to any recognition of Maori as Maori. Reacting to Maori assertiveness a number of additional discursive strands in Pakeha race discourse have been identified that modify existing understandings of race discourse in Aotearoa (Bell, 2004). The first, most powerfully manifest in recent works on identity (King, 1995), involved an attack on the unique (indigenous) status of Maori by explicitly constructing all population groups as immigrants. That move reconfigured the difference between indigenous and settler as merely length of residence. While Bell

noted ambivalence and some reservations about the manoeuvre she confirmed that it eroded the status of Maori and was, consequently, very effective in undermining sovereignty claims by Maori. Further, King utilised the narrative of his own life and experience to produce a fetching account of Pakeha indigeneity that resonated strongly with the commonsense ideology that linked identity to the development of the land by 'can-do' people. King's construction was, in effect, similar to claims by the Honourable Trevor Mallard, Minister of Education, that Pakeha possessed a kind of indigeneity that while distinct from that of Maori must nevertheless be regarded as authentic and a potent warrant for claims to belonging.

Media and Race

Analyses of media in modern and post-modern societies have concluded that media are the society's storytellers, repeatedly confirming and modifying the society's image of itself (Anderson, 1991; Condor, 1988, Fairclough, 1995; Hall, 2001). In and through those stories, whether in the factual or fictional genres, we get to meet and 'know' our fellow citizens and, consequently, consistently distorted depictions stigmatise those so portrayed (Nairn, 1999; van Dijk, 1993). All media storytelling occurs within regnant social and discourse practices (Fairclough, 1993, 1995) that include criteria or values that identify events or people as newsworthy, what Hall (2001, p. 338) termed "regimes of representation". In a major study of Canadian news media Ericson, Baranek & Chan (1987) identified deviance – departures from that deemed socially normal - as the prime characteristic of news stories. We argue that, in our colonial society, the indigenous peoples are routinely monitored for deviance.

As in other colonial societies, the media have played a major role in advancing and supporting Pakeha dominance in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. Settler journalists constructed the colonial wars as conflicts in which a savage rabble was inevitably overcome by the might and valour of British fighting men (Belich, 1986). That view was reproduced in the popular press, official accounts, education system and other institutions to become an established truth. Other commentators have drawn attention to more recent patterns in the way the settler press represents Maori and Maori issues. Wilson (1990) was strongly critical:

> "…there's nothing [the media] handle quite so badly [as Maori news]. They bungle it in all sorts of ways - playing down big issues (Maori language teaching), missing Maori implications in other issues (immigration), ignoring stories completely (major hui and festivals), quoting people who aren't Maori authorities (Winston Peters or Bob Jones)[3] and neglecting those who are, blowing up negative stories, getting them wrong and denying they did." (p49)

Walker (1990) evaluated media coverage of Maori claims to land and cultural recognition, and concluded:

> When these events involve Maori and Pakeha, it [media] consistently represents the Pakeha status quo, helping them to maintain their power. (p46)

Ramsden and Spoonley's (1993) analysis of media coverage of the cultural safety issue in nursing

[3] Maori rightwing politician and Pakeha property magnate respectively.

> "…questions the role of the media in defending traditional Pakeha values against any change which might provide Maori with different and more appropriate services."

Kernot (1990) showed that media crime reports used race labels, 'Maori', 'Pacific Islander' or 'Polynesian' up to four times as often as labels such as 'Pakeha', 'European' or 'Caucasian', creating a strong but illusory association between crime and ethnicity.

> McGregor and Comrie (1995) analysed news stories about Maori from television and radio between 1985 and 1994. Those stories made up only 5.5% of the total and showed "an overwhelming reliance on Pakeha newsmakers" (page?), relying on them as sources for 61.7% of stories. Maori sources were used in only 12.8% of the items. Television news about Maori was dominated by the bad, often expressed as conflict. Pakeha concepts and discourses of race relations pervade media constructions of issues involving Maori. Referring to the patterns previously described, McCreanor analysed media coverage of a particular protest and found that
>
> "…media stories both construct and are constructed by those commonsense ideological patterns and associations shared by their audience. The patterns act as boundaries or fields within which the commonsense of a social group can flow with ease and beyond which a speaker's discourse can be expected to meet with hostility or incomprehension." (1993a, p.82)

Those who believe that "activists" are completely justified in calling for redress for Maori grievances, cannot use the settler commonsense and have to explain their underlying assumptions before they can make their point. That necessity places them

at a disadvantage, given a ten-second soundbite, compared to opponents who can rely on existing understandings embedded in previous media constructions. Detailed study of particular instances of media coverage have demonstrated how those practices work to disadvantage Maori. Abel (1997) analysed television coverage of Waitangi Day[4] in 1990, identifying four discourses that were ranked hierarchically in that coverage. The pre-eminent discourse was:

> …the 'unity' discourse which referred to the Treaty (if at all) as a symbol of unity…saw the celebrations as moving people closer together and spoke of 'one people', 'our nation'. It described moves for Maori control over Maori resources and development as 'separatist' (p. 39).

In a version of the "Good Maori – Bad Maori" discourse, the coverage positioned Maori as either "wild" or "tame", that categorisation masking the breadth of Maori support for protests about Treaty grievances. Further, the media focussed on the tactics of protest rather than the injustices that stimulated the protest. As hypothesised (Fiske, 1987) the broadcast news was grounded in a presupposed equilibrium of 'celebration and consensus' that was disrupted by the protesters who were marginalised by the concluding summaries that proclaimed unity to be the reality of the day.

Discursive and content analyses of media coverage of a successful genetics research project that had been initiated by Maori demonstrated that the media construction of that bicultural partnership attributed the achievement only to the Pakeha partner, a genetics research team at Otago University. The stories failed to acknowledge that the Maori researchers had initiated the project, been responsible for the genealogical component of the work, and oversaw the application of the findings. Hodgetts et al

[4] Waitangi Day is an annual commemoration of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between the British Crown and the Maori people in 1840. Contested interpretations of the Treaty as alternatively ratifiying or extinguishing Maori sovereignty make the day a focus for opposed celebration and protest.

(2004) studied media coverage of the report *Decades of Disparity*. They demonstrated that the structure of the media items encouraged explanations based on individual lifestyle choices, implied that recently created Maori health services were ineffective, and sabotaged the report's strong evidence that health inequalities were structurally determined. No media workers questioned the role of mainstream health services in the disparities and media coverage of the debate ignored sophisticated Maori models of health in favour of Pakeha ones.

Studying media at the intersection of race and health

The evidence shows that oppression and marginalisation are inimical to a people's health. There is also evidence that the media contribute to that marginalisation, intensively monitoring members such social categories and constructing their deviance (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, et al., 1978). Looking at Aotearoa New Zealand as a colonial society we have shown that the colonists created a racist society and developed discourses to help naturalise and render invisible that oppression. We have sketched the media contribution to promoting and maintaining Pakeha domination. Critical analyses of media representations of Maori and relations between Maori and settlers have been shown to favour of the latter and, in a variety of ways, damage the former. While we acknowledge that there is a dialectical relationship between popular discourse/culture and media representations, we argue that in relation to the health and wellbeing of Maori, the media operate as a key apparatus of ongoing colonisation. By framing this in the terms suggested by Albee and Fryer (2003) as a public health issue, we endorse the notion that media racism should become a field of study to which critical and discursive psychology can make a profound contribution, changing approaches to the wellbeing of population groups, particularly Maori. Albee and Fryer stated that:

> Those in the field of public health argue correctly that primary prevention is the only practical way to reduce the incidence of many of the great plagues afflicting human beings. (p71)

There are three strategies for primary prevention; eliminating the noxious agent, preventing the transmission of the agent, and enhancing the resistance of the population to the agent. Our goal is to apply these principles to media bias, to prevent the transmission of racism, as that should greatly assist the elimination of institutional and personal racism and encourage resistance to racism, not least by encouraging the development of indigenous media options some of which already operate in Aotearoa New Zealand in the areas of print, radio and television.

Media theorists and researchers, both local and international, have little doubt that the mass media are a hugely influential, but remarkably unaccountable, source of made meanings and reality maintenance in contemporary societies (Chomsky, 2003; Hall et al 1978; McQuail, 2000). Some have argued that this constitutes a serious threat to democratic systems that need citizens to have ready access to trustworthy information, to prevent suffrage being wielded in ignorance (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Scammell, 2000). These problems are deep-seated, creating a thoroughgoing distrust of media outputs for, as O'Neil (2002) stated in her recent Reith Lecture:

> Good public debate must not only be accessible to but also assessable by its audiences. The press are skilled at making material accessible, but erratic about making it assessable. (p4)

The experience in this country with respect to coverage of race relations mirrors those concerns. Analyses of historical media texts have identified the content as racist and settler-serving (Belich, 1986; Ballara, 1980). Hirsh and Spoonley (1990) offered an analysis, both empirical and theoretical, of the means by which that bias was effected and the struggles of non-journalists to call the offending institutions to account. McGregor and Comrie (1992, 2002) and Abel (1997) confirmed the lack of accountability of New Zealand mass media in relation to race issues. Recent studies, presenting detailed accounts of the discursive and media practices, have demonstrated how the partiality is created. (Hodgetts et al, 2004; Rankine & McCreanor, 2004).

Consequently we are arguing for a new development in media research that begins to provide systematic, independent knowledge of how well coverage conveys the diverse, challenging issues of race relations, especially those concerning Maori and settler peoples. That possibility was inspired by the model and practices of media monitoring developed by the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) to address anti-Islamic coverage in that country. Through intensive study of annually gathered media archives CIC researchers have developed a set of indices that they apply systematically to subsequent items and bodies of coverage to produce ratings of anti-Islamic bias. For five years those ratings have been applied to bodies of media materials from specific newspapers, creating comparable ratings of each publication. Each year the Congress publishes 'league tables' that compare the bias of different newspapers. That process, the indices, the ratings, and the annual publication of findings, has proven to be both critical and educational, has led to changed and improved practices in a number of newspapers. Henry and Tator (2002) commented that the CIC intervention has improved awareness and accountability of editors and journalists, reducing the strength and frequency of anti-Islamic bias.

We have made a modest beginning to a project intended to lead to the development of a similar set of indices to underpin three distinct lines of work. First , using those indices to undergird an annual accounting of pro-settler bias in New Zealand mass media. Second, to create the technical capabilities and capacity to provide rapid research-based evaluations of the coverage of particular issues. Third using the indices and research to resource consultative and educational dialogues with journalists with the goal of enhancing the quality and standing of their work. The first two lines of work are conceptualised as directly undermining support for institutional and personal racism making an indirect but significant contribution to improved Maori health. We argue that the project, in the longer term, has the potential to make strong contributions to the common wealth by improving relationships between settlers and Maori by undermining stereotyped understandings fuelled by representations born in the colonial processes. The resultant improvements – increased inclusion, greater social cohesion, and generally improved wellbeing – will constitute valuable contributions to the public good.

References

Abel, S. (1997) *Shaping the news- Waitangi Day on Television*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D.J. & Sanford, R.N. (1950). *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York: Harper and Row

Albee, G. W., Fryer, D. M. (2003). Towards a public health psychology. 13, *1*. 71-75. Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology

Allport, G.W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, Mass: Addison Wesley.

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.

Antonovsky, A. (1996). The salutogenic model as a theory to guide health promotion. *Health Promotion International*, 11, 11-18.

Ballara, A. (1986). *Proud to be white: A survey of racial prejudice in New Zealand.* Auckland: Heinneman..

Barrett, M., & Connolly-Stone, K. (1998). The Treaty of Waitangi and social policy. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand, 11*: 29-49.

Belich, J. (1986). *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian interpretation of racial conflict.* Auckland [N.Z.]: Auckland University Press.

Belich , J. (1996). *Making peoples: a history of the New Zealanders from Polynesian settlement to the end of the nineteenth century.* Auckland: Penguin.

Billig, M. (2001).

Biggs, B. G. (1968). The Maori language past and present. In E. Schwimmer (ed.), *The Maori people in the Nineteen-Sixties*. Auckland: Blackwood & Janet Paul, 72-81.

Condor, S. (1988). 'Race stereotypes' and racist discourse. *Text, 8*, 69–89.

Corin, E. (1994). The social and cultural matrix of health and disease. In R. G. Evans, M. L. Barer, & T. R. Marmor (Eds.), *Why are some people healthy and others not? The determinants of health of populations* (pp. 93–132.) New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Chomsky, N. (2003) *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Easton, B. (1997). *The commercialisation of NewZealand*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse. *Discourse & Society*, *4*, 133–168.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. London: Arnold.

Gee, G. (2003) A Multilevel Analysis of the Relationship Between Institutional and Individual Racial Discrimination and Health Status. *American Journal of Public Health. 92*: 615-623.

Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T, Clarke, J. and Roberts, B. (1978) *Policing the crisis.* London: Macmillan.

Hall, S. (2001). The spectacle of the other. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. J. Yates (Eds.), *Discourse theory and practice: A Reader* (pp. 324–344). London: Sage.

Hamilton, D. (1981). Illusory correlation as a basis for stereotyping. In D. Hamilton (ed.), *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum.

Harrell, J., Hall, S. and Taliaferro, J. (2003) Physiological Responses to Racism and Discrimination: An Assessment of the Evidence.*American Journal of Public Health. 93*: 243-248.

Henry, F. and Tator, C. (2002) *Discourses of domination: racial bias in the Canadian English-language press*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hepworth, J. (2004). Public Health Psychology: A Conceptual and Practical Framework. *Journal of Health Psychology, 9* (1), 41-54.

Herman, E. and Chomsky, N. (1988) Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media. New York: Pantheon.

Hodgetts, D., Masters, B. & Roberston, N. (2004). Media coverage of 'Decades of Disparity' in ethnic mortality in Aotearoa. *Journal of Community Applied Social Psychology, 14*, 1-18.

Jackson, M. (2004) *The Crown baselines for legislation on the foreshore and seabed - an analysis*.http://www.foma.co.nz/hot_topics/details.htm?topicid=88*

James, S. (2003). Confronting the Moral Economy of US Racial/Ethnic Health Disparities.*American Journal of Public Health, 93*: 189.

Jones, C.P. (2000). Levels of racism: A theoretic framework and a gardener's tale. *American Journal of Public Health, 90*, 8, 1212-1215.

Jones, C.P. (1999) *Maori-Pakeha health disparities: Can Treaty settlements reverse the impacts of racism?* Report on Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowship. Ian Axford Fellowships Office: Wellington.

Joseph, P. (2000). Maori and the market: the Waitangi Tribunal. *Race and Class, 41*(4): 59-80.

Karlsen, S., & Nazroo, J. (2003). Relation Between Racial Discrimination, Social Class, and Health Among Ethnic Minority Groups. *American Journal of Public Health. 92*: 624-631.

Kawharu, H. (1989). *Waitangi : Maori and Pakeha perspectives of the Treaty of Waitangi*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Kelsey, J. (1995). *The New Zealand experiment: A world model for structural adjustment?*Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books.

Kernot, B. (1990) Race-tagging: The misuse of labels and the Press Council. In P. Spoonley & W. Hirsh (eds). *Between the Lines: Racism and the New Zealand media*. Auckland: Heinemann Reed, 53-55.

Krieger, N. (2003) Does Racism Harm Health? Did Child Abuse Exist Before 1962? On Explicit Questions, Critical Science, and Current Controversies: An Ecosocial Perspective. *American Journal of Public Health. 93*: 194-199.

Krieger, N. & Sidney, S. (1996). Racial discrimination and blood pressure: The CARDIA Study of young Black and White adults. *American Journal of Public Health, 86*, 10, 1370-1378.

LaViest, T.A. (2003). Racial segregation and longevity among Affrican-Americans: An individual-level analysis. *Health Services Research, 38*, (6 Pt 2), 1719-1733.

Lukes, M., Banuazizi, A., Liem, R., & Morris, M. (1996). *Myth about the Powerless: Contesting Social Inequalities*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

McCreanor, T. (1993a) Mimiwhangata: Media Reliance on Pakeha Commonsense in Interpretations of Maori Actions. *Sites* 26, 79-90.

McCreanor, T. N. (1993b). Pakeha ideology of Maori performance: a discourse analytic approach to the construction of educational failure in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Folia Linguistica, 27*, 293-314.

McCreanor, T. (1993c). Settling grievances to deny sovereignty: trade good for the year 2000. *Sites, 27*, 45-73.

McCreanor, T. N. (1997) When Racism Stepped Ashore: Antecedents of Anti-Maori Discourse in New Zealand. New Zealand Journal of Psychology. 23,43-57.

McCreanor, T. and Nairn R. (2002) Tauiwi general practitioners explanations of Maori health: Colonial relations in primary healthcare in Aotearoa/New Zealand? *Journal of Health Psychology*. 7, 5, 509-518.

McGregor, J. and Comrie, M. (1992) *Who's news?* Palmerston North, N.Z. : Dunmore Press.

McGregor, J. and Comrie, M. (2002) *What's news?: reclaiming journalism in New Zealand.* Palmerston North, N.Z.: Dunmore Press.

McGregor, J. and Comrie, M. (1995) *Balance and Fairness in Broadcasting News 1985-1994*. Massey University.

McGregor, J. and Te Awa, J. (1996) Racism and the News Media. In Paul Spoonley, Cluny Macpherson and David Pearson, (Eds). *Nga Patai: Racism and Ethnic Relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

McKenzie, K (2003) Race and Health *BMJ*. 326, i7380. 65.

McQuail, D. (2000) McQuail's mass communication theory. London: Sage.

Miles, R. (1994). Explaining racism in contemprorary Europe. In A. Rattansi & S. Westwood (eds), *Racism, Modernity and Identity: On the Western Front*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 189-221.

Murray, M. (2004). Introduction: Criticizing Health Psychology. In M. Murray (ed.), *Critical Health Psychology*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1-11.

Murray, M. and Cambell, C. (2003). Living in a Material World: Reflecting on Some Assumptions of Health Psychology. *Journal of Health Psychology. 8* (2), 231-236.

Nairn, R. and McCreanor, T. (1990) Sensitivity and Insensitivity: An imbalance in Pakeha accounts of Maori/Pakeha relations. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology.* 9, 3, 293-308.

Nairn, R. and McCreanor, T. (1991) Race Talk and Common Sense: Patterns in Pakeha discourse on Maori/Pakeha relations in New Zealand. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology.* 10, 4, 245-262.

Nairn, R. (1999). Does the use of psychiatrists as sources of information improve media depictions of mental illness? A pilot study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, *33*, 583–589.

Nazroo, J. (2003). The Structuring of Ethnic Inequalities in Health: Economic Position, Racial Discrimination, and Racism. *American Journal of Public Health. 93*: 277-284.

Ngata, A. (n.d.). Lecture read before the Wellington Branch of the Historical Association. Wellington: Wellington Branch of the Historical Association.

Ngata, Apirana. (1988) *The Genealogical Method as Applied to the Early History of New Zealand*, Paper

O'Neil, O. (2002) License to deceive. Reith Lecture 5. http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2002/lecture5.shtml

Orange, C. (1987). *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Wellington: Allen and Unwin.

Pember Reeves, W. (1899). *The Long White Cloud, Aotearoa*. London: Horace Marshall and Sons.

Radley, A. (2004). Suffering. In M. Murray (ed.), *Critical Health Psychology*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 31-43.

Ramsden, I and Spoonley, P. (1993) The Cultural Safety Debate in Nursing Education in Aotearoa. *NZ Annual Review of Education*, 4, 161-173

Rattansi, A. (1994). 'Western' racisms, ethnicities and identities in a 'Postmodern' France. In A. Rattansi & S. Westwood (eds), *Racism, Modernity and Identity: On the Western Front*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 15-86.

Richmond, J.C. (1867). *The New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, 862-863.

Reeves, F. (1983) *British racial discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Ryan, W. (1971). *Blaming the victim*. New York: Pantheon.

Sampson, E. (1993). *Celebrating the other*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Scammell, M. and Semetko, H. (2000) *The media, journalism and democracy*. Dartmouth: Ashgate.

Scott, K., Marwick, J. & Crampton, P. (2003). Utilization of general practitioner services in New Zealand and its relationship with income, ethnicity and government subsidy. *Health Services Management Research, 16*, 45-55

Sharp, A. (1997). *Justice and the Maori : the philosophy and practice of Maori claims in New Zealand since the 1970s*, Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Sinclair, K. (1957). *The Origins of the Maori Wars*. Auckland: New Zealand University Press.

Slater, D. (1994). Exploring other zones of the postmodern: problems of ethnocentrism and difference across the North-South divide. In A. Rattansi & S. Westwood (eds), *Racism, Modernity and Identity: On the Western Front*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 87-126.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: research and indigenous peoples*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press.

Spoonley,P. (1993). *Racism & Ethnicity.* Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Stafford, E. W. (1864). *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*. 1864-6, 621-624.

Turner, J. (1987). A self-categorisation theory. In J. Turner, M. Hogg, P. Oakes, S. Reicher, & M. Wetherell, *Rediscovering the Social Group: Aself-categorisation theory*. Oxford: Blackwell. .

Valencia, R. R. (1997). The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice. Washington [DC]: The Falmer Press.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1984). *Prejudice and discourse*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Van Dijk,T. A. (1991). *Racism and the press*. London: Routledge.

Van Dijk, T.A. (1993). *Elite Discourse and Racism.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Walker, R. (1986). Put Housing on the List. *New Zealand NZ Listener*. 8.9.86

Walker, R. (1990). *Ka whawhai tonu matou.* Auckland: Penguin.

Walker, R. (1990). The role of the press in defining Pakeha perceptions of the Maori. In P. Spoonley & W. Hirsh (eds). *Between the Lines: Racism and the new Zealand media*. Auckland: Heinemann Reed, 38-46.

Westbrooke, I., Baxter, J., & Hogan, J. (2001), Are Maori under-served for cardiac interventions? *New Zealand Medical Journal. 114*: 484–7.

Wetherell, M., & Potter, J. (1992). *Mapping the language of racism : discourse and the legitimation of exploitation/.* London : Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Wilkinson, S. (2004). Feminist contributions to critical health psychology. In M. Murray (ed.), *Critical Health Psychology*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 83-100.

Williams, D. (1989). British colonial treaty policies: A perspective. In H. Yensen, K. Hague, & T. McCreanor (1989). *Honouring the Treaty: An introduction for Pakeha to the Treaty of Waitangi.* Auckland: Penguin Books, 46-55.

Williams, D.R. (1999). Race, socioeconomic status, and health. The added effects of racism and discrimination. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 896*, 173-188.

Williams, D., Neighbors, H., & Jackson, J. (2003). Racial/Ethnic Discrimination and Health: Findings From Community Studies.*American Journal of Public Health, 93*, 200-208.

Wilson, G. (1990). New Zealand journalists: only partly professional. In P. Spoonley & W. Hirsh (eds). *Between the Lines: Racism and the new Zealand media*. Auckland: Heinemann Reed, 47-55.

Yensen, H., Hague, K., & McCreanor, T. (1989). *Honouring the Treaty: An introduction for Pakeha to the Treaty of Waitangi.* Auckland: Penguin Books.

Media, racism and public health psychology

Nairn, Raymond

2006-03